

I join the Saginaw County Convention and Visitors Bureau as they honor and salute the above individuals and organizations with the 1999 Pinnacle Award. Through their hard work and diligent efforts, the economy and quality of life in Saginaw County is greatly enhanced.●

BOISE MODEL PROGRAM NAMED 1999 PRESIDENT'S SERVICE AWARD HONOREE

● Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, every year the President's Service Award honors volunteers for their efforts directed at solving critical social problems facing today's communities. This year, Hewlett Packard's Hispanic Student Outreach program, based in Boise, ID, has been named one of 21 honorees. This unparalleled distinction is the highest honor given annually by the President of the United States for volunteerism. The award is sponsored by the Points of Light Foundation and the Corporation for National Service.

As a 1999 honoree, program representatives traveled to Washington, DC, to participate in awards festivities October 13-15. This trip included a Capitol Hill Reception, an awards dinner and the participation in 1999 President's Service Awards Ceremony.

In 1995, Hewlett Packard employees in Boise, ID, started the Hispanic Student Outreach Program (HSOP) because they were concerned about the alarming 60 to 70 percent high school dropout rate among Hispanic youths. Based on the adopt-a-school concept, the program matches Hewlett Packard employees with teachers and students at a local middle school. The volunteers act as role models, motivating and encouraging the students to stay in school. The HSOP is the only program of its kind in Idaho. Through this program more than 250 Hewlett Packard volunteers have touched the lives of nearly 1,600 Hispanic students.

The program includes many activities, one of which is Career Day. These educational field trips for 7th and 8th grade students include the students to Hewlett Packard offices for hands-on science experiments, job shadowing and computer lab sessions, local science center trips, and university campus talks and tours. The college campus trips have proven especially significant by allowing the Hispanic middle school students to interact with Hispanic college students. Another effective program is the after school math tutoring program which pays local college students to tutor younger students. Professionals are also brought into the schools monthly to talk about career opportunities and the importance of math, science and writing skills beyond middle school.

Elena Tsuxton, the founder and Chairperson for the HSOP, commented that the "program is absolutely

thrilled to be receiving the President's Service Award." She saw it as a "validation of our efforts that we are definitely meeting a critical need in our community and state. If we can help one more Hispanic student to finish school and go out to college, we will have met the HSOP program vision."

The President's Service Awards were created as the President's Volunteer Action Award in 1982 to honor outstanding individuals and organizations engaged in volunteer service directed at solving critical social problems while calling public attention to the contributions made by the nation's 93 million volunteers. In 1999, more than 3,500 nominations were submitted and reviewed in four activity areas: human needs, environmental needs, educational improvement, and public safety. A select panel of distinguished Americans judged the nominations based on achievement, meeting community needs innovation and mobilizing others to serve.

Mr. President, I congratulate this Idaho volunteer program for receiving this well deserved honor and thank them for their service to Idaho and its youth.●

UNITED HEALTHCARE

● Mr. GRAMS. Mr. President, I rise to express my support and appreciation regarding actions taken at United Healthcare that clearly demonstrate to me that proposed congressional action in the area referred to as "patient's rights" can be best handled by the marketplace.

Yesterday, United Healthcare announced they will be changing the way they manage care in their health plans by giving physicians the final say in determining what course of treatment their patients will receive. In citing the reasons for the change of policy, United noted the savings resulting from their \$100 million review process do not justify continuing it.

United Healthcare is the second-largest health insurer in the nation and I believe their actions signal an industrywide realization that their review process may be saving them less than they thought.

According to United Healthcare, 99 percent of their claims are approved despite an exhaustive review process. While this raises the question of exactly why the federal government needs to disrupt the entire health system by getting involved with one percent of health care claims, it also demonstrates our current private-sector health care providers must respond to consumer concerns or lose their customers to health providers that do.

Of course, United Healthcare will still have some review process and require physicians to notify them when a patient needs an expensive procedure or requires hospitalization. This is

clear in all of our interests to ensure the appropriate treatments are considered. We should trust our physicians, but with the rapid advancements made in health care every day it is reasonable for us to have a team of experts review all the latest treatments, devices and pharmaceuticals. Clearly, this is an area where health plans are, and should be assisting physicians and ensuring quality health services are offered appropriately in their facilities.

By changing their review process, United Healthcare will reduce its medical monitoring staff by 20 percent and re-focus the remaining staff on Care Coordination efforts.

This saves money for the plan which in turn saves money for consumers through lower premiums. I believe it is a significant step in the right direction, proving once again, that market forces and demands are productive and responsive. Government solutions usually distort market forces and end up with poorer services at higher costs.

I should like to be clear about my support for the Patient's Bill of Rights Plus legislation I cosponsored and voted for—it is still needed because it addresses other important issues. What this change of practice announced by United Health does signal is the potential for us to reach a reasonable conclusion to negotiations underway between the House-passed Patient's Bill of Rights and the Senate-passed Patient's Bill of Rights Plus, particularly on the contentious issue of health plan liability.

Mr. President, it is hard to overstate the importance of this announcement from United Healthcare and I felt it was imperative someone in Congress acknowledged private market forces for positive change far outweigh a government imposed remedy.●

TRIBUTE TO SENATOR JOHN CHAFEE'S STAFF

● Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, with all of the tributes to Senator John Chafee over the last few weeks I think it is important that we do not forget his talented and dedicated staff. In particular I would like to thank his staff on the Environment and Public Works Committee. He assembled a very professional team, well respected not only on both sides of the aisle but also within the larger environmental professional community.

I call special attention to Senator Chafee's staff director, Jimmie Powell. Jimmie has served Congress over the last 20 years in various positions, and has worked on every major environmental statute over the last 20 years. Earlier this year, the National Journal called him a "low key aide whose political insights and institutional memory are sought out by industry lobbyists." This is an understatement. There is no Senate staffer, or House staffer, with